

Message Text

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ACTION SCCT-01

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5766

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL ASMARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 10283

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, ET

SUBJECT: CISCO TWO: TAPE

REF: STATE 190102; DAMASCUS 3055

1. DUB OF 15-MINUTE TAPED INTERVIEW WITH STEPHEN CAMPBELL AND JAMES HARRELL RECEIVED FROM ZIMMERMAN OF ABC WHO APPARENTLY PURCHASED IT FROM SOURCE CITED DAMASCUS REFTEL. ZIMMERMAN INFORMS HE OUTBID UPI FOR IT AND REQUESTS WE PROTECT CONTENTS FROM MEDIA COMPETITORS UNTIL ABC RELEASES. HE REQUESTS ALSO THAT SINCE HE DID NOT HAVE TIME TO REQUEST ABC PERMISSION TO TURN OVER DUB TO EMBASSY, IT BE REFERRED TO ONLY AS SUMMARY TRANSCRIPT OR, BETTER YET, NOT REFERRED TO AT ALL.

2. ON TAPE INTERVIEWER REFERS TO CAPTORS AS "PLF FIGHTERS."

3. CAMPBELL DESCRIBES HIMSELF AS SUPERVISOR EMPLOYED FOURTEEN MONTHS AT KAGNEW TRANSMITTER SITE WHILE HARRELL SAYS HE IS TRANSMITTER OPERATOR EMPLOYED THERE THREE MONTHS. CAMPBELL SAYS HE WAS IN NAVY FOR SEVEN
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YEARS, SERVING IN SPAIN AND ON A SHIP WHICH MADE THREE

MEDITERRANEAN CRUISES. HARRELL SAYS HE RETIRED AFTER 20 YEARS IN ARMY INCLUDING TOURS IN GERMANY, OKINAWA AND VIETNAM.

4. CAMPBELL CHOSE WORDS CAREFULLY TO DUCK ALL LEADING QUESTIONS ON POLITICS, ERITREAN REVOLUTION ETC. WITHOUT BEING ANTAGONISTIC. HARRELL, LESS SELF-ASSURED, GENERALLY SEEKS TO FOLLOW CAMPBELL LEAD BUT INSTEAD OF SIDE-STEPPING ALL POLITICAL QUESTIONS, AND PARTICULARLY INTERVIEWER'S PROBES ABOUT HIS "FEELINGS AS A BLACK MAN," TAKES REFUGE IN STATEMENTS LIKE "I'M JUST A TRANSMITTER OPERATOR" OR "I'LL HAVE TO THINK ABOUT THAT." BOTH REPLY NEGATIVELY WHEN ASKED IF THEY HAVE VISITED ISRAEL AND NEITHER REALLY ANSWER QUESTION AS TO ROLE OF STATION "IN MIDEAST SITUATION" AND "ARAB-ISRAELI WAR."

5. BOTH AGREE THEY NOW BEING WELL TREATED BUT BY STRESSING WORDS "HERE" AND "NOW" MAKE IT CLEAR CONDITIONS EN ROUTE FROM SCENE OF KIDNAPPING TO PRESENT LOCATION WERE NOT GOOD. CAMPBELL SAYS HE HAS "BAD COLD FROM CHANGE OF CLIMATES AND A LOT OF THE WALKING WE DID." HARRELL SAYS HE HAD DYSENTERY FOR ABOUT FIVE DAYS AND "HAD A LOT OF PEOPLE..HELPING CARRY ME DOWN" THE MOUNTAINS "BECAUSE I COULDN'T WALK IT." HOWEVER HE ASSURES "I'M OK NOW" AND EXPRESSES BELIEF "WE'LL GET BACK ALL RIGHT." CAMPBELL SAYS "I DONT KNOW WHEN WE'LL BE LEAVING YET BUT EVERYTHING'S OKAY NOW."

6. ASKED ROLE OF KAGNEW STATION BASE" IN RED SEA AREA AND IN ME" CAMPBELL REPLIES: "WE SUPPORT THE U.S.NAVY IN DIEGO GARCIA. WE SUPPORT NAVY SHIPS. AND WE SUPPORT STATE DEPARTMENT AIRPLANES AT THE BASE NOW." ASKED ABOUT ROLE OF NAVY PERSONNEL AT STATION CAMPBELL SAYS THEY HANDLE THE MESSAGE TRAFFIC. HE DUCKS ANOTHER QUESTION ON CONTENTS OF MESSAGES BY SAYING THESE NOT HANDLED BY HIS CIVILIAN COMPANY.

7. HARRELL AVOIDS ALL SUCH QUESTIONS BY SAYING HE ONLY TOOK KAGNEW JOB TO AVOID DEPORTATION FROM ETHIOPIA WHERE HE WAS LIVING WITH HIS ETHIOPIAN WIFE AND WAS TOO LOW LEVEL "TO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON."

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8. TAPE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN RECORDED IN AT LEAST THREE SITTINGS, WITHOUT WRITTEN SCRIPT BUT AFTER SOME PRIOR DISCUSSION OF SUBJECT MATTER. IN FINAL SECTION, RECORDED AT SLIGHTLY FASTER SPEED, POSSIBLY INDICATING DIFFERENT POWER SOURCE, INTERROGATOR AGAIN PRESSES CAMPBELL ON BASE FUNCTIONS AND CAN BE HEARD IN BACKGROUND PRODDING HIM WITH KEY WORDS TO GIVE RIGHT ANSWERS. CAMPBELL RELUCTANTLY AND WITH WHAT SOUNDS LIKE DELIBERATE VAGUENESS AND INCOHERENCE SAYS:

8. "WE PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR DIEGO GARCIA, THE NAVAL BASE THERE. ALSO WE PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THE NAVAL SHIPS IN THE RED SEA AREA. WE PROVIDE TRANSMITTER SUPPORT FOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL PLANES THROUGHOUT THE AREA, (PAUSE AND PROMTING) SUCH AS FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE, THE STATE DEPARTMENT, ANYBODY INVOLVED IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT. (PROMPTING IN BACKGROUND AGAIN AND REFERENCE TO "SECRETARY OF STATE.") RIGHT. ALL THE WORK IS THROUGH SUPPORT, ITS ACTUALLY DONE, AH, THROUGH HENRY KISSINGER (PAUSE), FOR HENRY KISSINGER."

9. ANY LISTENER TO TAPE WILL CONCLUDE THAT REFERENCES TO SECRETARY OF STATE ARE AT INSISTENCE OF INTERVIEWER.

10. AS REQUESTED IN STATE REFTTEL, MAILING TWO TAPE DUBS TO ADDIS AND TWO TO DEPARMENT WITH TRANSCRIPTS. CAN CABLE FULL TRANSCRIPT IF DESIRED. AZ ZIMMERMAN SENDING FILM UNPROCESSED TO ABC NEW YORK, DEPARTMENT MUST OBTAIN FILM COPIES THERE.
GODLEY

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